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BATH — A couple dozen Bath-area residents turned out last Thursday evening at the Bath Congregational Church for a chance to air their concerns to U.S. Rep. Charles Bass and Executive Councilor Ray Burton. The topics of discussion ran the gamut from the Northern Pass Project to "Obamacare" and a lack of bipartisanship in Congress.

Both Bass and Burton are up for re-election this year, and Bass also toured Littleton Regional Hospital and met with community and town officials in Lincoln on his way up to the 6 p.m. town hall-style meeting in Bath.

A day after Northern Pass project opponents claimed victory with the state Senate passage of property rights bill HB 648, Bass said he hopes Northeast Utility and HydroQuebec realize that they need to go back to the drawing boards and come up with a "completely different plan."

"The time has come for a reevaluation of this project," said Bass. "The sooner the utility faces that reality, I think the better for people who are worried about land value and tourism, and better for their side [as well]."

Though he has opposed the project since it was unveiled more than a year ago, Bass said he agreed with a constituent who said that it wasn't that most people don't want hydroelectric power, it's that they want it done in a way that doesn't destroy the landscape.

The discussion switched to Obamacare when one of his constituents asked why seniors are considered "units" in literature that is coming out of the new legislation.

Bass said he would have to look into that specific question, but took the chance to update the audience on his health care stance.

"It's not that I think that the present system is good, it's not good," said Bass. "But ... the new health care law is all about access and nothing about cost."

However, the congressman also doesn't like what Obamacare is doing to businesses.

"I think the most insidious issue — regardless of whether you think that the plan is good or not — is the uncertainty that it has created in the employment community, because nobody in a business knows what the incremental cost of adding an employee will be," said Bass.

Another constituent took the opportunity to criticize the lack of bipartisanship over solving the United State's deficit problem and creating jobs — "this squabbling has got to end," he said.

Bass seemed to agree and attempted to respond without blaming anyone, however, he couldn't help but point out that the Senate — controlled by Democrats — was holding up more than two

dozen bills passed by the House that would help the U.S. economy.